

## JCPC Minutes    March 9, 2017

Members Present: Doug Slaughter, Chair, Steve Braun, Tamson Ely, Phoebe Hazzard, Connie Kruger, Bernie Kubiak, Alex Lefebvre

Also Present: David Ziomek, Paris Boyce CPAC Chairwoman, Sonia Aldrich, Claire McGinnis

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Doug Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M.

David Ziomek presented the request from the **Conservation Department:**

Puffer's Pond Dredging Permitting:    FY 18 \$25,000

- Time has come to do this; last done @20 years ago, and that was a partial dredge
- Need to figure out depth of pond and depth of sediment
- Pre-work for this will take several years
- Need to hire an environmental engineer
- Need to determine how much sediment needs to be removed and test for contamination
- Current estimate for FY 20 is just that—an estimate
- Not sure if it can be done in stages
- Costs full vs. partial dredge; trucking costs the biggest expense
- Funding sources include capital, but also CPAC and will look for grants but maybe unlikely
- Will look at contributing issues like brooks
- Wall at Cushman Brook to help reduce sediment not built; no forebay or clean out done
- Mill Street Bridge moving up on the state's list
- Will then get the area fixed up, bridge, pond and also address parking
- Puffers Dam, over 100 years old, is in good shape, by law must be inspected every 2 yrs.
- Do routine maintenance and test emergency release for the dam
- In the past could drain the pond and use bulldozer to remove sediment-- 1970s environmental regulations prevent this, as it impacts pond's aquatic life

Tractor— Third year lease/own    FY 18 \$17,334

- Game changer for the department; staff love it
- Replaces 25 year old tractor which is still maintained for small projects
- Huge help in watershed (water fund pays other ½ of this item), forests and for the trails
- John Deere, full cab with attached brush hog bucket
- Cuts brush, mows fields, moves logs which results in less sediment in watershed areas
- Department manages 5000 acres in Amherst, Pelham and Shutesbury surrounding wells and reservoirs
- Has CPAC proposal for work on land recently purchased
- Biggest cost in maintaining conservation land is creating access for people
- Some areas like 10 acres on the Holyoke range need only to be walked once a year

In FY 19 we need to increase efficiency. Conservation Commission and LSSE Commissions are meeting to discuss how deferred maintenance is a big issue for both. If 250 acres can be mowed in half the time, this saves staff time to do more.

Paris Boyce presented capital proposals from CPAC, **Community Preservation Act Committee**

- Affordable housing budget reserve \$250,000 to be set aside for future projects
- Administrative costs, goes to the CP Coalition, \$3,500
- Jones Library \$25,000 to document extent and nature of changes to the building over time
- North Common Phase 2, from design to construction, \$180,000
- West Cemetery to repair badly damaged headstones in 1870s section, \$50,000
- Amherst Historical Society for review of textile collection, costumes, dolls; to have a consultant help evaluate the collection of 500 pieces, including a storage plan \$8,980
- North Amherst Community farm rehab project for farmhouse and barn, \$10,000
- Did not recommend funding for Craig's Door or Community First programs for rental subsidies and case management costs; eligibility and liability issues need to be addressed before funding could be considered
- Two land acquisitions: Cole Property (includes 2 streams at foot of Mt. Norwottuck, with access to other lands and parking) and the Kieras property (125K acres suitable for agriculture and possible garden plots and home to some endangered habitats)
- Funds to be borrowed for land purchased, \$75,000 for Cole and \$125,000 for Kieras
- Amherst College land now used for community gardens may no longer be available
- Conservation land improvements (bridges, boardwalks, etc.) \$30,000
- Conservation Land Due Diligence (routine maintenance, surveys, appraisals) \$20,000
- Recreation—Mill River pools (filter, pumps) replace 1970s system, \$100,000
- Mill River basketball courts (redo surface, painting, hoop structure, backboard) \$50,000
- Groff Park Modernization (\$500,000 borrowed for total project), Phase 2 includes playground and pavilion, should be completed by 2018
- Community Field, \$50,000 for architectural and engineering survey to contribute to the master plan with the schools. Community Field is town land, but fields across the street belong to the schools.
- Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust \$20,000 for PT staff to help generate affordable housing opportunities
- Should the housing reserve funds (\$250,000 above) go into the Trust?
- If the Trust controls the fund, it can be more proactive
- Trust has one mission—affordable housing, and CPAC has many areas in its mission
- Paris will bring this consideration back to the CPAC committee
- JCA Steeple restoration, \$244,683 is CPAC's contribution, JCA adding funds as well for historical restoration of one of the oldest churches in town (now used as synagogue).
- Steeple had been hit by lightning and they did an assessment and found the wood all rotten. Restoring steeple not integral to their mission, but value the historical significance and want to preserve it

- Remainder of CPAC funds for debt service for projects funded in previous years; will be adding two additional projects (land acquisitions) in FY 18, other projects will be completed in the next few years.
- Currently looking at projects, such as Puffers, which could fit under CPAC

Dave Ziomek added the following:

- There is a Recreation Working Group trying to do inventory of capital assets at all the town recreation areas, some have been funded by CPAC and some by town capital
- Filter and pump at Mill River are over 40 years old and the parking lots are the original 1972 ones
- Need to have a capital plan for recreation areas; the inventory will help determine what needs to be done
- Some are on-going maintenance, others need capital improvements
- Applying for state grants for Groff Park land and conservation area. If get funding in October, then CPAC would not have to borrow funds (\$500,000) for Groff.
- Projects in CPAC pipeline needs to be coordinated with town areas
- Plum Brook area was redone, but not much else in recreation has been improved
- We have a five year plan for Cherry Hill, but none for the other recreation areas
- Have inventory of town buildings; need inventory of recreation areas which will help define a multiple year plan

Minutes from 3-2-17 approved as amended, 7 in favor, one member absent

Claire McGinnis presented some options for ways in which the current deficit of \$1.7 million (between available funds and requested capital projects ) could be managed, including borrowing for some items, moving some projects to FY 19, seeking grant funds.

Town Manager Bockelman also sent his proposed recommendations for possible ways to balance the capital budget by establishing priorities and meeting with department heads to see which requests might be postponed.

These recommendations will be reviewed by the committee and discussed at its next meeting.

Another issue of concern is that some capital projects are not ready to be funded in the spring and are put off until the fall town meeting which often creates confusion about overall capital funds for a given year. Perhaps all projects should be funded in the spring and only emergency capital projects brought to Fall Town Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Tamson Ely, Acting Clerk

#### **Documents List:**

Conservation Department Capital Request Summary 2018-2022

FY2018 CPAC Project Recommendations to Town Meeting

JCPC General Fund Five Year Capital Plan FY 2017-2021 JCPC Dept. Requests

JCPC General Fund Five Year Capital Plan FY 2017-2021 Revised Balanced version